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## THE POSTEXILIC HISTORY OF ISRAEL. III.

## THE RETURN UNDER ZERUBBABEL.

In the preceding two papers we have glanced at the most important facts of the Babylonian period; the present paper covers the first twenty-three years of the Persian period. The biblical sources of information are the first six chapters of Ezra, the first eight chapters of Zechariah, Haggai, and some of the psalms, with such inferences as may be drawn from the accounts of earlier and later times. The apocryphal book of 1 Esdras gives an account that sometimes differs from that of Ezra; and Josephus commonly follows 1 Esdras. Outside the Bible, a few facts are to be gleaned from inscriptions of the Persian kings, and from the Greek historians.

*The chronology.* In the canon of Ptolemy, the years of the period are named for the following kings:

B. C. 538-530 are the 9 years of Cyrus.

B. C. 529-522 are the 8 years of Cambyses.

B. C. 521-486 are the 36 years of Darius Hystaspes.

As a matter of fact, the king known as Gomates, or the pseudo-Smerdis, was on the throne for some months between Cambyses and Darius. It follows that the Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes of Ezra 4:6, 7 were Cambyses and Gomates, and that Josephus is mistaken in attributing to Cambyses the acts which Ezra attributes to Artaxerxes.

*The dated events.*—550-540 B. C. Medo-Persian conquests, including the empire of Cræsus, the Greeks in Asia Minor, and countries farther east. Visions of Daniel, chaps. 7 and 8.

539 B. C. Cyrus captures Babylon. Organization of his empire under 120 satraps, with Daniel for one of three presidents, Dan. 6:1-3.

538 B. C. 1st year of Cyrus. Daniel's supplication for the restoration of Jerusalem, Dan. 9. The decree of Cyrus, and the going up of Zerubbabel, Ezra 1. In the seventh month, the dedication of the altar, the feast of tabernacles, and the re-establishment of the sacred year, Ezra 3:1-6.\*

\* The dates, as here given, assume that Darius the Mede was Cyrus, or, if you prefer, that there was no Darius the Mede different from Cyrus. If we should assume, instead, that Darius the Mede was a different person from Cyrus, that might be a reason for dating the events here placed in B. C. 538 and 537 two or three years later, but the other dates would not be affected.

537 B. C. 2nd of Cyrus. Founding of the temple, second month, Ezra 3; 7-13; Jos. *Cont. Ap.* I. 21. Daniel and the lions? Dan. 6. Opposition to temple from the people of the land, Ezra 4: 1-5.

537-522 B. C. Obstructions thrown in the way of the work on the temple, during the reigns of Cyrus and Cambyses, Ezra 4: 4-6.

536 B. C. Daniel's great vision, Dan. 10-12. Death of Daniel, probably.

532 B. C. or earlier. Cambyses co-regnant with Cyrus (*Encyclopædia Americana*, I. 382, col. 1).

530 B. C. Death of Cyrus in battle. Accession of Cambyses.

526 B. C. Cambyses invaded Egypt by sea and land, the strength of his navy being Phœnician and Syrian.

522 B. C. 8th year of Cambyses. Gomates, in Babylonia, assumes sovereignty. Cambyses marches from Egypt against him, but commits suicide in Syria.

522-520 B. C. Work on temple suspended, Ezra 4: 7-24, cf. 1 Esdr. and Josephus.\*

521 B. C. Darius becomes king. This is also counted his first year, Gomates being left out of the canon, and the reign of Darius counted from the death of Cambyses.

520 B. C. 2nd of Darius. The work resumed, under the urging of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, Ezra 4: 24; 5: 1-2. Sixth month, first day, a prophecy of Haggai, Hag. 1: 1-11; twenty-fourth day, the work begun, 1: 12-15. Official inquiry concerning the work, Ezra 5: 2-17. Seventh month,

The "first year" of Cyrus as king of Persia was probably B. C. 559, Herodotus *Clio* 214; his "first year" as king of the Medes and Persians was B. C. 550 or 549; his "first year" as successor of Nabonidus in Babylon was 538 B. C. As our information now stands, it is probable that he assumed this last character directly upon the capture of the city; but there is no absurdity in the idea that he may have had a Median colleague, nominally his senior, during all this part of his career, and that this colleague was the Darius of the book of Daniel. If this was the case, Cyrus may have had a fourth "first year," that in which he became sole emperor; and it is supposable that the year mentioned in Dan. 1: 21 and Ezra 1: 1 may be this fourth first year. On this supposition, this latter first year may have been B. C. 536, cf. Dan. 1: 21; 10: 1; 9: 2. All this, however, is mere conjecture.

\* "And they were hindered from building for the space of two years, until the reign of Darius," 1 Esdr. 5: 73. Here seems to be a trace of a correct tradition, in the midst of much that is confused. The actual cessation of the work was for about two years, though the author of 1 Esdr. is mistaken, if he intends to convey the meaning that the whole time of hindrance, from Cyrus to Darius, was but two years.

twenty-first day, Haggai's prophecy concerning one more great convulsion of the nations, 2:1-9. Eighth month, first discourse of Zechariah, Zech. 1:1-6. Ninth month, twenty-fourth day, two prophecies of Haggai, 2:10-19 and 20-23. Eleventh month, twenty-fourth day, Zechariah's prophecy of the Eight Visions, with the symbolical act that followed (6:9-15), Zech. 1:7-6:15. The decree of Darius received, Zech. 6:10 (?); Ezra 6:1-14.

518 B. C. 4th of Darius. Ninth month, fourth day, prophecy of Zechariah concerning the fasts, 7:1-8:23.

516 B. C. 6th of Darius. Temple finished third day of twelfth month, that is, about a month before the new moon of the spring equinox, B. C. 515, Ezra 6:14-18.\*

515 B. C. 7th of Darius. The passover, first month, Ezra 6:19-22.

*Cyrus, and his religious character.*—There is an idea of Cyrus, widely current among those who study the Bible from secondary sources, made up by modifying the Greek stories† by sup-

\* The twenty-third day, according to Jos. *Ant.* XI. iv. 7; 1 Esdr. 7:5. Josephus says that seven years were occupied in building this temple. This may possibly be a fragment of correct tradition, counting five years of the reign of Darius, and two years, before the hindering began, in the reign of Cyrus. But Josephus says that the completion of it was in the ninth of Darius, which seems to be an incorrect inference from the facts that the building began in the second of Darius, and occupied seven years.

† For the sources of the history of Cyrus, see the STUDENT for July, 1889, page 30, including note, and page 35, note. The so-called Cuneiform Tablet of Cyrus is of unbaked clay, about 4 by 3½ inches in size, with two columns of writing on each side, the first and fourth columns mostly gone, and the others mutilated. Subjoined is the translation of the third and fourth columns given by Mr. Pinches in the *Trans. of the Soc. of Bib. Arch.*, VII. 139 sq.

" . . . the river . . . [in] the month Adar, Istar of Erech . . . the gods of the land of Persia (?) . . . gods . . . Nebo from Borsippa to Uddu (?) . . . the king to E-tur-kalama descended in . . . and the lower sea revolted to go (?) . . . Bel went forth, a sacrifice for sin for peace they made, in the month . . . the gods of Surda, Zamalmal and the gods of Kis, Beltis and [the gods of] Kharsak-Khalama to Babylon came down, at the end of the month Elul the gods of Akkad . . . which (were) above the atmosphere and below the atmosphere to Babylon descended, the gods of Borsippa, Cutha, and Sippar descended not. In the month Tammuz Cyrus battle in Rutu against . . . from the river Nizallat to the midst of the army of Akkad then made. The men of Akkad a revolt raised, the warriors on the 14th day Sipar without fighting took. Nabunahid fled. The 16th day Ug-ba-ru, governor of the country of Gu-ti-um, and the army of Cyrus without fighting to Babylon descended, afterwards Nabunahid, when he had bound, into Babylon he took. At the end of the month Tammuz rebels of the land of Gu-ti-um the gates of E-sag-gil closed, for its defense nothing in E-sag-gil and the temples was placed and a weapon not then

posed applications of Old Testament prophecy, which must be carefully banished from our minds, if we wish to understand what is now known concerning him. His conquest of Babylonia was made easy by the revolting to him of subjects of Nabonidus. The Cyrus tablet informs us that his general Gobryas went to Babylon without fighting, in July; it does not state whether he then took the city without fighting. Cyrus himself went there in the autumn, and made administrative arrangements. The inscriptions do not confirm the story of Herodotus that the city was taken at a time of festival, by deflecting the water of the Euphrates, though they do not necessarily contradict this, and very tantalizingly have something to say about the internal fortifications. It is not probable that the change of dynasty was affected without bloodshed at Babylon, and it is equally improbable that there was any very marked carnage.

The idea that Cyrus, being a Zoroastrian, was a monotheist, and therefore was attracted to the religion of Jehovah and repelled by the Babylonian idolatry, is exploded by the inscriptions that have been discovered. According to the Bible, Cyrus was Jehovah's servant and agent, and recognized

there was. Marchesvan the 3d day Cyrus to Babylon descended, the roads before him (were) dark. Peace to the city he established, Cyrus peace to Babylon all of it promised. Gubaru his governor and governors in Babylon he appointed and from the month Kislev to the month Adar the gods of Akkad whom Nabunahid to Babylon had sent down also to their shrines (?) they brought back. The month Marchesvan dark, the eleventh day, Ugbaru unto . . . and the king died. From the 27th day of the month Adar to the 3d day of the month Nisan weeping in Akkad there was, all the people (from) their chief (were) free. (On) the 4th day Kambyases son of Cyrus at the Temple of the Sceptre of the World a festival instituted (?) the man of the Temple of the Sceptre of Nebo who . . . went, in the lower part dwelling, (in) Elam the hands of Nebo [took him (?) and] brought him back (?) . . . children and . . . when the son of the king to . . . Nebo at E-sag-gil he collected, victims in the presence of Bel . . . lord . . . of the Babylonians . . . (to) the temples he gathered . . . he fixes. The month when the gate fell . . . E-an-na of Erech . . . from the house (?) of Chaos came forth . . . zi . . . in Babylon . . . am (?) . . . Babylon a funeral pile also."

If this were printed in such a way as to indicate the lines in the original, and the length of the lacunae, some of the peculiarities of punctuation would be explained, and there would be a slight gain in intelligibility; but at its best, it is full of tantalizing uncertainties.

In the *Independent* of August 15, 1889, is an article on Belhazzar, by Mr. Pinches, in which he makes it to be "the son of the king" instead of the king, that died in the month Marchesvan, making an exact correspondence with Dan. 5:30.

Jehovah as "the God," "the God of heaven," these being customary titles of Jehovah; but there is nothing in this to indicate that the Jews thought of him as a spiritual worshiper of Jehovah, or that he might not treat the Babylonian gods, or the gods of the other great religions of his subjects, with equal respect. Precisely this is what the inscriptions represent him as doing.

*The condition of the exiled people at the time of the first return.* During the reign of Menahem, in the middle of the eighth century B. C., and a little later, during the reign of Pekah, the Assyrians deported large numbers of the inhabitants of northern Israel, 1 Chron. 5: 6, 23-26; 2 Kgs. 15: 19, 20, 29; 2 Chron. 30: 6-10; Zech. 10: 10-11; Jos. *Ant.* IX. xii. 3. That Judah shared somewhat in these misfortunes may be probably inferred from 2 Chron. 29: 9; Isa. 11: 11, 16, cf. 2 Chron. 28: 20, etc. In 2 Kgs. 17, 18, we have an account of the wholesale deportation of the people of the northern kingdom. A little later, Sennacherib claims to have made large deportations from Judah. That he contemplated a general deportation appears from 2 Kgs. 18: 32. Later came the deportations by Nebuchadnezzar. In addition to those who were officially carried off, many became fugitives in order to escape the troubles that beset their country.

In the OLD TESTAMENT STUDENT for June, 1888, page 231, sec. 4, are given certain reasons for holding that the earlier exiles, both from Israel and Judah, had maintained their separate race existence, and their religion, and that the exiles of Nebuchadnezzar's time found them in the various regions where they went, and were merged with them, so that the Jews of post-exilic times represent all Israel, and not the tribe of Judah only. The list of passages there given is pretty full, and might be largely extended. Without using space on this point, we may yet notice just one of the passages:

"And thou, son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and all the house of Israel his companions: and join them for thee one to another into one stick, that they may become one in thine hand. . . . Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his companions: and will put them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. . . . Behold, I will take

the children of Israel from among the nations, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all," Ezek. 37: 16-22.

Ezekiel here evidently speaks of the northern Israelites as still in existence, in his time, and as in contact with the Judaites, and about to become consolidated with them; and in these particulars, the passage is strictly representative.

The earlier exiles were immensely more numerous than the later; before Nebuchadnezzar's time, Palestine had become relatively depopulated, so that he only carried off thousands, where his Assyrian predecessors had carried off tens of thousands. The Israelites had already been resident for several generations in the various countries which came at length to be subject to Nebuchadnezzar. Many of them had wealth and influence. But there were great men among the exiles deported by Nebuchadnezzar, such men as Ezekiel, and Daniel and his companions, and doubtless the leadership of their race fell largely into their hands. For the rest, some of the expatriated Israelites were doubtless imprisoned, or enslaved, or set to labor upon the public works; but, so far as appears, the great body of them resided as citizens in the countries whither they were carried, and were faithful subjects of the Babylonian empire, whatever resentments or ambitions they may have cherished in secret. Their prophets inculcated the duty of loyalty to the existing sovereign, but were also making predictions of the future overthrow of the oppressor. We have not many details as to the manner of life they led, but Ezekiel lets us know that they had their elders, and their priests, and their prophets, both true and false, as formerly in Palestine.

The view that the Jews, moved by hatred for the Babylonians, and by a feeling of affinity for the monotheistic Persians, were actively engaged in the political movements that placed Cyrus upon the throne is a favorite view with many, and figures quite largely, in various ways, in current interpretations of prophecy; but facts in support of this view are lacking. Before 539 B. C., there had been Jewish exiles among the subjects of Cyrus, as well as among those of Nabonidus;

Media and Elam had formerly been parts of the Assyrian empire, and had been in political combination with Nebuchadnezzar. The Jews were so situated that their interests were with conservatism, and, in the absence of specific information, we must deem it unlikely that, in either country, they played the part of active revolutionists.

According to Ezra 2 and Neh. 7, the whole number who returned to Judæa "at first" was about 50,000, including slaves. It is possible that this enumeration includes others than those who came with Zerubbabel. In any case, the returning exiles were very few, compared with their compatriots who remained scattered throughout the Persian empire. From the fact that they were to be aided by contributions "along with" and "apart from" the freewill offerings that were given for the house (Ezra 1:4, 6), we may infer that most of them were not of the wealthier class. From this point, we need to remember, the national history of the Jews has been a divided history, the Palestinian part of it being no more real than the extra-Palestinian.

*The holy land, as the returning exiles found it.*—According to 2 Kgs. 17, 18, the territory of northern Israel, after the carrying off of its Israelite inhabitants, was repopled with colonists from abroad. That this was done mainly within a few years after the downfall of Samaria appears from the records of Sargon, as well as from the most natural understanding of the biblical account; but later, there were additional importations by Esar-haddon, and perhaps by other Assyrian kings, Ezra 4:2, 10. Apparently Judah was not thus repopled after Nebuchadnezzar's deportations, but was left uninhabited.

All statements like these must be understood relatively. The incident in Jer. 40:11-12 is representative. Without doubt, in both northern and southern Israel, some of the inhabitants escaped deportation, and others who had fled as fugitives, returned, when the immediate danger was over. Josiah found Israelites in the territory of northern Israel, and extended his reform to them, 2 Kgs. 23:15 sq.; 2 Chron. 34:6.

From what the Old Testament says concerning Elijah, Elisha, Hosea, and Amos, for example, it appears that the northern Israelites, as well as the southern, were worshipers of Jehovah. The prophets condemn the worship of the calves at Bethel and Dan, and yet that worship was professedly, at least in part, Jehovah-worship. Even the scholars



who affirm the postexilic origin of most of the Pentateuchal legislation do not dispute the fact that some of the Pentateuchal usages were early in vogue among the ten tribes. It further appears that the preaching of Hosea and Amos was not utterly fruitless; there were revived impulses in the religion of Jehovah, just before Samaria went into exile. We read that Hoshea "did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, yet not as the kings of Israel that were before him," 2 Kgs. 17:2. It is a significant comment on this statement that Hezekiah sought, and partially obtained, the coöperation of the people of the ten tribes, in his work of reform, 2 Chron. 30:6-11, 25. This had its effect in keeping distinct the Israelites who went into exile, and it also had its effect in Palestine. As we are not to understand that the Israelites were entirely supplanted by the colonists brought in by the Assyrian kings, so we are not to understand that their worship of Jehovah was entirely obliterated. The priests who were sent to teach "the manner of the god of the land," 2 Kgs. 17, certainly found Israelites living there among the colonists, and worshipping Jehovah. This element in the mixed Samaritan religion of these and later times should not be neglected.

Doubtless Zerubbabel and his colleagues found the land of Judah nearly uninhabited—lying desolate, as it had lain for fifty years. But scattered thinly through it, and peopling the adjacent regions, were inhabitants of three sorts, more or less intermingled: first, the natives of the neighboring countries, who appear later in the postexilic narratives, Philistines, Phœnicians, Edomites, Ammonites, Syrians, Arabs; second, the descendants of the colonists who had been imported by the Assyrian kings; and third, people of Israelitish race, living among these. The people who proposed to join in the work, but whose coöperation was refused, Ezra 4:2-3, belonged ostensibly to the second of these classes, but were doubtless of mixed blood.

There are important problems concerning the law and the literature of Israel, connecting themselves with this part of the history; but these are mostly continuous with similar problems belonging to the next topic, namely, The Interval between Zerubbabel and Ezra; and they can best be considered together.

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